

Statement

Working Group on Human Rights (WGR) demands prompt inquiry into violent attack in JNU

New Delhi, January 8 -- The Working Group on Human Rights (WGHR) in India and the UN strongly condemn the impunity with which a violent mob attacked students and faculty and vandalised property on the campus of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on the evening of 5th January.

WGHR has called on authorities to undertake prompt, independent, impartial and thorough inquiry into these incidents of attacks with a view to establishing accountability of those responsible and dereliction of duty. On Sunday evening, masked persons armed with sticks and iron rods, attacked students and faculty members, damaged property and inside the campus, injuring more than 30 people,

We seek urgent and appropriate intervention because there appears to have been gross violation of law, Constitutional guarantees and fundamental principles. The investigation should also look into providing effective remedy to victims.

There appears to have been a grave failure on the part of the university administration in responding decisively and ensuring the safety of students and faculty on campus. The reports of injured persons and eye witnesses on the failure of the police to stop the mob from targeted assault and vandalism, and thereafter the manner in which the investigation is proceeding raises serious concerns on the integrity of police investigation.

In these circumstances WGHR considers, that to restore confidence not only on JNU campus but also among citizens, an independent, impartial and time bound inquiry be in the light of the JNU Students' Union assertion that the attack was orchestrated by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). The inquiry must take place regardless of whichever group is behind the violence.

WGHR calls on authorities to abide by Constitutional guarantees and international legal obligations on human rights. While these protect persons from torture and ill-treatment and the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, they also mandate that police refrain from using unnecessary and disproportionate force.

The WGHR is a network of human rights groups in India working on a range of issues including gender, children's rights, land and Dalit concerns.

Signed

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